ESSEX RESIDENT TO RECEIVE A COVETED BRITISH CITIZEN AWARD

Ian Wilson, from Southend-on-Sea in Essex is to receive a prestigious national award at the Palace of Westminster on 24th January 2019. Ian is to receive the British Citizen Award for Services to Healthcare (BCAh).

Netpark Wellbeing is a mental health and wellbeing project which encourages people living with dementia and mental health problems to exercise and enjoy the sensory elements of a walk in a local park followed by some therapeutic digital or traditional art to express their emotions. It is a partnership project run by arts organization, Metal and Southend Borough Council. For three years, Ian has been dedicated to helping 829 individuals to date to improve their quality of life.

Courses last for 12-weeks, but for those that need extra time in a safe environment to work through their difficult feelings Ian ensures there is an opportunity for them to fulfil their potential. Volunteering for at least three days per week, Ian is equally comfortable setting up the room and gathering the art equipment as he is walking with the service users through the park.

Findings from the courses have revealed that dementia patients may forget certain words making communication fragmented overall, however meaning and feelings remain present. This inspired Ian to immerse himself in combining the work of Netpark with schools, and the NHS to help create a new artwork App that helps to raise awareness, called Garden of Remember. Ian helps to run two dementia art therapy groups with 18 participants. He helped to liaise with a local school to send year 6 students to walk with some of the dementia patients around the park. The intergenerational walks inspired the children to ask questions of the dementia patients, which were recorded onto iPads. The footage was the subject of school workshops led by an artist and writer, before being professionally digitised and illustrated to form an awareness app.

If you run the app in the park, you are directed to 12 different locations where GPS located short, vignette stories play automatically. In ‘Home’ mode, you can hear/read the stories from anywhere in the world. The purpose of the App is to: make the general public aware that people living with dementia have a wonderful way of communicating about their past; raise general awareness of what it is like to live with dementia; create a living legacy for those with dementia and the children participating; and to enable the cross generational artwork to be preserved.

Ian also helped the project to secure lasting funding whilst enabling over 800 people to have a well-being experience.
The British Citizen Awards (BCAs) were launched in 2015, to recognise exceptional individuals who work tirelessly and selflessly to make a positive impact on society. BCAs are awarded twice annually, and recognise extraordinary people whose achievements may otherwise be overlooked.

Ian Wilson, is one of 31 medalists who will be honoured at a prestigious ceremony on 24th January 2019, at the Palace of Westminster. All BCA recipients have selflessly undertaken various activities in support of a number of worthy causes. Each will receive a Medal of Honour, inscribed with the words ‘For the Good of the Country’. Medalists are also invited to use the initials BCA after their name.

Hosting the event is TV star Michael Underwood, who stated “Having presented the very first British Citizen Awards, it’s a real honour to be invited back and a privilege. I am looking forward to learning more about the incredible people being recognised for their contribution to society”.

The medals will be presented by Senior Representatives from Specsavers, Unilever, Places for People, Unity Trust Bank, Experian and The Co-operative Bank, who all sponsor these awards widely referred to as ‘the People’s Honour’s.

***ENDS***

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For more information please contact press@britishcitizenawards.co.uk or call 0203 002 7764.

Notes to Editors
The British Citizen Award recognises individuals that positively impact others and highlights the positive aspects of multi-cultural communities, workplaces, community groups and charities throughout the UK. It is accessible to all and serves to celebrate the good things that make Britain great.

There is no fee for making a nomination. Nominees who are granted a BCA will be invited to attend the Presentation Day at the Palace of Westminster. Presentations are held twice annually in January and July.

The full list of categories for the British Citizen Awards are:
BCA for Service to Community
BCAi for Service to Industry
BCAa for Service to Arts
BCAe for Services to Education
BCAh for services to Healthcare
BCAb for Service to Business
BCAv for Volunteering & Charitable Giving
BCAo for International Achievement